

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

INRE-00 AID-20 IO-12 RSR-01 /117 W  
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P R 031600 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1178

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 1876

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINR, NU

SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONVENTION SURPRISING SUCCESS  
FOR AGUERO

1. SUMMARY: A SURPRISINGLY HEAVY TURNOUT, 208 OF 247 DELEGATES AT THE APRIL 1 CONSERVATIVE PARTY ( PCN) CONVENTION GAVE A POWERFUL BOOST TO DR FERNANDO AGUERO'S CLAIM TO CONTINUED PARTY LEADERSHIP. ENDORSING AGUERO AS PRESIDENT, THE CONVENTION DELEGATES DISAFFILIATED AND REPLACED VICE PRESIDENT EDMUNDO PAGUAGA IRIAS AND 14 OTHER PARTY OFFICIALS SUPPORTING HIS MOVE TO OVERTHROW THE AGUERO LEADERSHIP. IMMEDIATE REACTION OF THE SOMOZA GOVERNMENT AND PAGUAGA FACTION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE TO DECLARE CONVENTION ILLEGAL AND ITS ACTS NULL AND VOID, WHILE AGUERO TAKES HIS CASE TO THE PEOPLE AND THE COURTS. OVER LONG RUN, CONVENTION INDICATES THAT PAGUAGA STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO TO ATTAIN MAJORITY CONTROL OF PARTY AND THAT HE AND SOMOZA WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH A STRONGER AND MORE DETERMINED AGUERO. END SUMMARY.

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2. TO THE SURPRISE OF MOST OBSERVERS AND THE AGUERISTAS THEMSELVES, 208 OF THE 247 PCN CONVENTION DELEGATES APPARENTLY ATTENDED THE APRIL 1 MEETING IN MASAYA. REPORTS AS TO THE NUMBER OF ALTERNATES IN THIS TOTAL WHO WERE SUBSTITUTING FOR ABSENT REGULAR DELEGATES RANGE FROM 64 TO 23. TO MEET ANTICIPATED CHARGES OF FRAUD FROM THE PAGUAGA FACTION, ALL DELEGATES WERE DULY INSCRIBED AND THEIR SIGNATURES NOTARIZED AND THESE DOCUMENTS WILL BE PUBLISHED. BARRING ANY MATERIAL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, THE ATTENDANCE FIGURES APPEAR TO BE VALID.

3. THE FIVE HOUR CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS WERE LIVELY BUT ORDERLY. THE UNEXPECTED PRESENCE OF AN ANTI- AGUERO, ANTI- POLITICAL PACT DISSIDENT GROUP LED BY ALBERTO SABORIO AND DANILO AGUIRRE OF LA PRENSA ADDED SPICE TO THE DEBATES. A REINFORCED NATIONAL GUARD POLICE CONTINGENT WAS ON HAND AND SLIGHTLY HARASSED DELEGATES BY NOT ALLOWING THEIR BUSES TO ENTER THE CITY, BUT THEY DID NOT ARREST ANYONE OR PREVENT THEIR ENTERING THE MEETING PLACE. THE PROCEEDINGS WERE RECORDED FOR BROADCAST AND 13 JOURNALISTS, INCLUDING WIRE SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES, ATTENDED.

4. PARTY PRESIDENT AGUERO OPENED WITH A KEYNOTE SPEECH IN WHICH HE ( A ) DEFENDED HIS LEADING THE PARTY INTO THE POLITICAL PACT ON THE GROUNDS ITS PROMISED BENEFITS, REBUILDING OF THE PARTY AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL REFORMS, JUSTIFIED THE ATTEMPT AND HE HONESTLY BELIEVED THAT SOMOZA WAS ACTING IN GOOD FAITH UNTIL EVENTS SINCE THE EARTHQUAKE REVEALED SOMOZA'S GRAND DECEPTION, ( B ) ATTACKED THE " RICH CONSERVATIVE OLIGARCHY " AND DEMONSTRATED HOW THEIR BETRAYAL OF THE PARTY AND COLLABORATION WITH SOMOZA SERVED THEIR VESTED INTERESTS AND ( C ) REPEATED HIS ALLEGATIONS THAT AMBASSADOR SHELTON TRIED TO INFLUENCE HIM TO GO ALONG WITH SOMOZA AS MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION AND INTERVENED IN NINICAGUA'S INTERNAL POLITICS.

5. FOLLOWING AGUERO'S SPEECH, THE ASSEMBLY TOOK THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

A. REMOVED FROM THEIR PARTY OFFICES AND DISAFFILIATED FROM THE PCN VICE PRESIDENT PAGUAGA, TREASURER CHAMORRO, TECHNICAL SECRETARY CUADRA, COUNSEL HERDOCIA AND ELEVEN OTHER LEADING MEMBERS OF THE PAGUAGA GROUP.

B. ELECTED REPLACEMENTS LOYAL TO AGUERO TO THESE VACATED  
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POSITIONS.

C. AMENDED THE PARTY STATUTES AND CONFIRMED THAT THE DIRECTO-

RATE WOULD CONTINUE TO EXERCISE THE FULL POWERS OF THE CONVENTION BETWEEN CONVENTION SESSIONS.

D. CONDEMNED VIOLATIONS OF THE LIBERAL CONSERVATIVE PACT BY GENERAL SOMOZA AND THE LIBERAL PARTY.

E. APPROVED AND APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT OF AGUERO'S REPLACEMENT ON THE NATIONAL GOVERNING COUNCIL BY PAGUAGA.

6. PRIOR TO THE CONVENTION PAGUAGA ISSUED A STATEMENT THAT HIS GROUP WOULD NOT ATTEND BECAUSE THE MEETING WAS ILLEGAL UNDER THE LAW BANNING ALL POLITICAL ACTIVITY. PAGUAGA ALSO PUBLISHED IN NOVEDADES A LIST OF 111 " DELEGATES" WHO REPORTEDLY SIGNED A PETITION AGREEING WITH THIS VIEW. HOWEVER, REPORTS INDICATE THAT THIS LIST WAS A MIXTURE OF ABOUT HALF REGULAR DELEGATES AND HALF ALTERNATES WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT IT INCLUDED ONLY ONE FOURTH OF THE POTENTIAL 444 " DELEGATES".  
SHELTON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAGUA 1876

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7. ON THE EVE OF THE CONVENTION, GEN SOMOZA MADE A STATEMENT SAYING THAT THE EARTHQUAKE SEPARATED THE MEN WHO WORK FOR

RECONSTRUCTION FROM THE BOYS WHO ONLY PLAY POLITICS. HE SAID THE PEOPLE WANTED PEACE AND PROGRESS NOW RATHER THAN POLITICS. ON MARCH 30 MIN OF GOVERNMENT MARIN SENT A TELEGRAM TO AGUERO INFORMING HIM THAT THE SCHEDULED CONVENTION WAS PROHIBITED UNDER THE LAW BANNING POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND WARNING HIM OF THE CONSEQUENCES. AGUERO REPLIED THAT THE MEETING WAS PROTECTED UNDER THE CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE OF FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY UNDER AROOF ( BAJO TECHO), THAT IT WAS A PEACEFUL GATHERING AND ANY DIRE CONSEQUENCES WOULD RESULT FROM ILLEGAL ACTS OF THE GON NOT THE PCN.

8. COMMENT: AGUERO, WHO SEEMED TO BE ON THE RUN SINCE HIS OUSTER FROM THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, HAS APPARENTLY TURNED THE TIDE ON HIS OPPONENTS IN THE PAGUAGA FACTION AND BOOSTED HIS STOCK CONSIDERABLY, AT LEAST FOR THE SHORT RUN. THIS SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT APPEARS TO RESULT MORE FROM THE INEPTNESS OF THE PAGUAGA CAMPAIGN THAN FROM AGUERO'S OWN INCREASED STRENGTH. EMBASSY CONVERSATIONS WITH RANK AND FILE CONSERVATIVES SUGGEST CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT MANY OF THE TACTIC EMPLOYED BY PAGUAGA MAY HAVE BACKFIRED. FOR EXAMPLE, HIS OPEN AND HALF HEARTED ATTEMPTS TO BUY DELEGATES AND PRESSURE PEOPLE WITH LOSS OF PATRONAGE JOBS LEFT THEM NO HONORABLE GROUNDS ON WHICH TO JOIN HIM. THE PAGUAGA CAMP'S CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH SOMOZA WAS JUST A BIT TOO MUCH OUT IN THE OPEN; THEREBY LENDING CREDENCE TO AGUERO'S CONTENTION THAT THE ISSUE WAS WHO RUNDS THE PCN, SOMOZA OR THE CONSERVATIVES. PAGUAGA'S FAILURE TO EVER AIR HIS COMPLAINTS AGAINST AGUERO WITHIN THE PARTY LESSENED THEIR IMPACT ON THOSE WHO OTHERWISE AGREED WITH THEM. MOREOVER, PAGUAGA'S RECENT ARBITRARY ASSUMPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY MAY WELL HAVE UPSET CONVENTION DELEGATES WHO ARE THE ONLY ONES EMPOWERED TO ELECT THE PARTY'S PRESIDENT. DESPITE HIS CONVENTION SUCCESS, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHERE AGUERO GOES FROM HERE. HE WILL OBVIOUSLY TRY TO GARNER AS MUCH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION AND KEEP PRESSURE ON SOMOZA. HOWEVER, WHEN THIS DIES DOWN HE WILL STILL HAVE TO SEEK NEW WAYS AND MEANS TO MAINTAIN HIS MOMENTUM AND NEW DIRECTIONS IN WHICH TO LEAD HIS PARTY. PAGUAGA, MEANWHILE, MAY WELL HAVE DISAPPOINTED BOTH HIS FOLLOWERS AND GENERAL SOMOZA. WE WILL ASSESS HIS FUTURE IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM.

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